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**By Dr. Richard E. Littlebear, President of Chief Dull Knife College, Lama Deer, Montana**

Chief Dull Knife (CDKC) is located in the community of Lama Deer, on the 444,000 acre Northern Cheyenne Reservation in southeastern Montana. The college was originally chartered by the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council in 1975 as Dull Knife Memorial College. The name of the college was changed in 2001 to emphasize the importance of Dull Knife as a chief of the Northern Cheyenne people. Although Dull Knife is a Sioux name, among the Northern Cheyenne he is known as Vooheheva, or Morning Star.

Accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, Chief Dull Knife College is one of approximately 35 tribal colleges and universities in the United States and one of seven within Montana. CDKC and its counterparts were established because from the time of the first English settlements, Native Americans have been encouraged to participate in the ritual of Western civilization. But the goal of this encouragement as almost always had been assimilation, seldom the enhancement of the Indian students or the well being of their tribes. However, assimilation is contrary to the glaringly obvious fact that young people on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation grow up in a culturally distinct community. Despite its struggles with poverty, substance abuse, unemployment, and political disenfranchisement, this Reservation has retained many of its distinctive cultural traditions. Although many Northern Cheyenne tend to embrace these traditions as adults, growing up where these traditions exist means that young people in Lama Deer, Montana, are qualitatively different from young people in suburban America.

Assimilation-oriented programs, especially those that are coercive, have never worked with the Northern Cheyenne people and probably with others who have found themselves in similar circumstances. These assimilation-oriented policies have consistently had a residual negative effect on Northern Cheyenne students. When the students left the Reservation to attend college, many would fail for a number of reasons. Stereotypes or characterizations of American Indians as "dirty," "lazy," "Drunk," and "dumb" were primarily inhibitors of realizing any degree of success. Assimilation-based educational programs neither prepared them for the hostility they encountered in larger academic institutions nor the academic rigor they would experience, absent the extended family and cultural support systems available on the Reservation. At times the students were inadequately prepared for a large college or university, perhaps resulting from the lack of American Indian role models, underprepared and/or unqualified K-12 teachers, inadequate school materials and equipment, etc. It therefore became obvious to a group of American Indian educators that a successful educational



program must relate the learning experience to the environment wherein the students grow up. This group of educators promoted the idea of creating colleges on their own reservations, and although initially opposed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the tribal colleges and universities movement was born and continues to thrive today.

The spirit of what is now Chief Dull Knife College is founded in what John Monnett, in his book *Tell Them We Are Going Home*, most recently referred to as the Cheyenne Odyssey. In his book, Monnett provides a historical analysis of a period within which the Northern Cheyenne demonstrated determination effectively with the challenges of the future. The Cheyenne Odyssey, under the leadership of Chief Dull Knife and Chief Little Wolf, was about to change, about determination, about providing those who followed them the opportunity for a better life in their homeland. Chief Dull Knife College has accepted this vision as part of its missions and continues to, as Chief Dull Knife said, "Learn this new way of life"... a way of life, that even today is constantly changing.

Like most tribal colleges, Chief Dull Knife College was initiated in meager facilities. The college began as a vocational training program, housed in army tents, in Ashland, Montana. It wasn't until three years later that an 11,900 sq. ft. facility was built using funding from the Indian Technical Assistance Center of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Lame Deer. The original facility was built on the current campus site, but was constructed primarily for vocational training purposes. In subsequent years, construction grants from the National Science Foundation, USDA, and the American Indian College Fund/Lily Foundation have allowed the college to remodel the facility, and it currently houses laboratories and classrooms for science, math, computer science, agriculture, and secretarial science courses, as well as the college's extension program. The facility's heating system was also converted from coal-fired boilers to propane heat, and while an electrical retrofit was completed as well, expanded technology in the classrooms and labs has created additional electrical complications.

In 1979, a 5,500 sq. ft. facility that was originally constructed to house the tribal commodity distribution program was acquired and remodeled by building trades students. This remodeled facility replaced a dilapidated trailer that housed what is now the Dr. John Woodenlegs Memorial Library, a library which serves as both the college and community library. An adjacent 13,800 sq. ft. facility built to house an inpatient drug and alcohol program was given to the college in 1980 for expansion of programs and services. With the assistance of subsequent renovation grants, the college's building trades students were able to remodel the facility, and it currently houses four classrooms, to remodel the facility, and it currently houses four classrooms, faculty and staff offices, the college cafeteria, bookstore, a student learning lab, and the college administration offices.

With increased student enrollment, the need for student child care services increased, and the college was able to renovate a 2,030 sq ft. facility located adjacent to the campus to house child care services. The building, which was originally constructed in the early 1960's as a mechanical shop for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, continued to serve as the day care center until recently when it was converted to a student activity center. Unfortunately, all of these original facilities, although remodeled and renovated to the extent possible, are substandard with respect to layout and energy efficiency because they were not originally designed as college facilities. Despite several recently completed expansion projects, CDKC operates at a level that exceeds capacity for current classroom, office, and meeting space. Records indicate an average of 390 hours of instructional use per year in a facility designed for 270 hours. The largest room on campus for classes and/or community meetings is 1,200 sq. ft., which prevents the college from hosting workshops, seminars, classes, and meetings in excess of 60 people.

CDKC serves approximately 300 students each academic year. Approximately 85% of these students are Native American, 70% are female, and a significant number of the students are either heads of households or are unmarried, primary caregivers to young children. In addition, 90% of entering students are low-income and 80% are first-generation college students. The fact that 90% of the students are eligible for federal student financial aid assistance and 80% are fully Pell Grant eligible is not surprising when one considers the social milieu within which they were raised. Nearly 50% of Cheyenne families live under the poverty level and unemployment fluctuates between 60% and 85% because of seasonal employment opportunities. Almost 42% of the Reservation's populations are under the age of 18 and 64. The persistence of low educational achievement caused in part by the 40% to 60% school dropout rate in local schools,



poverty, unemployment, and underemployment across several generations presents strong challenges to all academic institutions on the Reservation, including CDKC. Clearly, absent the opportunity to attend the local tribal college, these students wouldn't have had the opportunity to pursue and realize their postsecondary educational goals.

However, in just short of 30 years time, Chief Dull Knife College continues to grow and successfully offer accredited association degree and certificate programs to residents of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation as well as surrounding communities. In addition, the college has established and maintains articulation agreements with institutions within the Montana University System that facilitate "seamless" transfer and acceptance of all credits and degrees earned at CDKC. These agreements have been critically important to CDKC in that nearly 60% of all the college's graduates transition to the four-year level. With the addition of interactive television technology at CDKC, the college has been able to expand opportunities for upper-level students to complete advanced degrees online, thereby providing the facilities for continued educational opportunities. In this manner, CDKC is very responsive to identified community needs and is therefore more than simply a community college.

CDKC has been extraordinarily successful in developing and strengthening new and existing academic programs. It has been and is currently a major participant in the National Science Foundation's Tribal College University Partnership (TCUP), through which it has significantly enhanced math and science teaching through innovative pedagogy and rigorous evaluation. It has developed and expanded science programs with a grant from the National Science Foundation's Rural Systemic Initiative (RSI) in learning skills and established learning labs to assist students with self-paced software programs in math courses. The USDA Extension Program at the college has additionally expanded its services to the reservation community and offers a variety of financial workshops, tax preparation, and nutritional programs designed to target community needs.

While special grant funding is not uncommon for ordinary general education programs, it has been difficult for the college to secure special funding to fulfill one of the most basic purposes of the tribal college- to provide postsecondary education in a culturally relevant context. There is a desperate need in Indian country to not just "save" traditional culture as an abstract or theoretical "good," but to use traditional culture as an active and critically important part of community cultural survival in education, economic development, and social integrity, which, in turn, contributes to the community's ability to build a sustainable society after a century of military conquest, economic disenfranchisement, and political isolation.

Notwithstanding that tribal colleges, such as CDKC, were originally established to undertake educational programs in a culturally appropriate environment, funding formulas for tribal colleges ordinarily support on the most bare-bones activities in student services and instruction. Congress itself recognized the "chronically underfunded" status of tribal colleges (United States Senate 2002). Thus tribal colleges are often only able to support activities directly related to the most elementary functions of the institution- such as teaching mathematics or English, or keeping student records- with their continuing funding sources, even though cultural projects, which from the rationale for establishing tribal colleges, go unfunded, unless the institution is able to identify and receive special grants. CDKC has been minimally successful in this area, receiving a grant from the Administration for Native Americans to support Class 7 language certification training and from the State of Montana under the Office of the Governor's "Indian Education for All" initiative.

In addition to the regular academic programs offered at CDKC, several students and faculty members have been involved in both internships and exchange opportunities. Three faculty members and several students have participated in cultural exchanges in Mali over the past three years. CDKC students have also successfully interned at Brown University, the University of Montana and Montana State University in "Bridges" programs. Although most of these internships have been science related, it has given participating students an opportunity to experience other cultures and communities. CDKC hopes that future exchanges can involve students and faculty from other areas of the United States or foreign countries visiting the Reservation. There are many stereotypes that could be dispelled and valuable exchanges or information shared with these kinds of opportunities.

Although CDKC has demonstrated steady but meager growth over the years in a fiscal sense, the increased shortage of funding to support the necessary staffing for an expanding student population has severely limited the college in its ability



to provide identified and essential programs and services to its students and community. Increased student enrollment has also increased the need for additional classrooms, library, and archival space, laboratories, and student recreational facilities. Over the past five years, CDKC has increased its student headcount by 10% per year and the full-time student enrollment by 20% each year. The college has also significantly increased its student retention and graduation rates while at the same time effectively addressing the many challenges incumbent in assisting handicapped students.

The success being realized with increased student enrollment and the identified need for expanded programs and services has seriously been impacted by reductions in funding. One such area that occurs annually is the arbitrary reductions in the amount of federally negotiated indirect funding received. Although negotiated and budgeted on an annual basis, CDKC receives an average of 65% of the anticipated amount, which results in staff reductions institution-wide. The college, in order to sustain the most basic operations required to meet accreditation standards and institutional effectiveness, has cut two faculty positions, the dean of cultural affairs, a finance manager, an archivist within the library and culture studies area, three facility maintenance positions, and the institutional development position. With these necessary reductions in staff, the workload assumed by remaining staff has stretched staffing very thin, and therefore, adding additional programs and services with existing staff is not a viable option.

When the U.S. Congress enacted the Tribal Colleges and Universities Act in the late 1970's, the legislated per pupil cost was \$5,820. This amount has never been appropriated, and therefore CDKC has been required to operate with as little as \$2,800 per ISC (Indian Student Count) to more recently \$4,200 per ISC. Since 1979, CDKC has operated at a level of funding which remains far below actual cost per student. Even if the original legislated amount were to be appropriated, it would not take into account subsequent inflation and therefore would still be inadequate. CDKC feels strongly that the legislated amount of \$5,820 per ISC needs to be appropriated, and because it would simply be an action to meet preexisting legislation, it would not constitute a policy change.

A non-Federal policy issue that the college faces is funding for non-Indian students, called non-beneficiary students, who are not included in federal legislation. Each year the presidents of the seven Montana tribal colleges have to implore the appropriate state legislative committee to appropriate funding for these non-beneficiary students, since they are not covered under the Tribal Colleges and Universities Act. Even when the legislature approves funding for these students, it is far below the \$5,000 mark, typically generating \$1,500 per non-beneficiary student.

This means that CDKC supplements the State of Montana approximately \$4,000 per non-beneficiary student yearly. Although the legislature has taken action that will provide line-item funding in future budgets, there are no guarantees and no assurances that the amount appropriated will increase. In short, Chief Dull Knife College must depend largely upon special funding to launch new academic programs or services. Until such time as there is fiscal accountability at the federal and state levels for the programs and services offered, the college will remain grossly underfunded. It has been said that tribal colleges and universities are underfunded miracles. CDKC definitely fits that description in that despite being underfunded, it has succeeded in increasing student enrollment, increasing student retention, increasing numbers of students realizing their educational goals, and expanding programs and services to the community it serves. In addition, existing campus facilities have been remodeled and five new facilities constructed on campus. The new buildings are the early childhood learning center funded by HUD and USDA, the adult education/literacy center funded by the Lily Foundation and USDA, the vocational skills center funded by USDA, the Florence Whiteman Culture Center funded by the Lily Foundation, and a recently completed visiting lecturer center funded by USDA. All of these facilities were designed and constructed utilizing sustainable green-build technology in cooperation with the American Indian Housing Initiative (AIHI). AIHI is a national collaborative in public scholarship joining Penn State University, the University of Washington, the University of Wisconsin, and Chief Dull Knife College in an effort to proliferate teaching, learning, and discovery of green building technologies and sustainable development strategies, while simultaneously utilizing these methods to address housing and community facilities crises endemic to Plains Indian communities. Penn State, the University of Wisconsin, USDA, and HUD have been by far the most active partners in these endeavors and the appealing factor for these straw-bale buildings is the energy efficiency which results in lowered utility costs to the college.

As CDKC realizes increased enrollment, the need for additional land for the campus and construction revenues will become imperative. Four facility needs that will require resolution in the near future include a new classroom/office complex, a student multipurpose center, a new library, and a new maintenance facility. Hopefully, with the expansion of fundraising activity on campus, these new facilities can be built and the college can continue to realize the words of Chief Dull Knife when he said, "Let us ask for schools to be built in our country so that our children can go to these schools and learn this new way of life."

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*Richard E. Littlebear*